



*Saint Louis Audubon*

*Bulletin*

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## KAREN KRATOVILLE OF PRICE SCHOOL WINS AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIP

On "Loyalty Night," April 10th, Miss Karen Kratoville, teacher of the elementary grades in the Price School, Ladue, was presented with the Society's annual scholarship to a National Audubon Camp for her outstanding record during the year in the teaching of nature appreciation and wise use of natural resources to youngsters. She will attend the Wisconsin Camp. **Congratulations, Karen!**

Two book awards, autographed by Dick Grossenheider of "A Field Guide to the Mammals," by Grossenheider and W. H. Burt, were won by high school students in recognition of their interest and activities in the field of nature study and conservation. Eleven City and County boys and girls also won awards of St. Louis Audubon Society memberships in recognition of their excellent records in nature activities.

"Great Smoky Skyland," a film-lecture of beauty and varied content by G. Harrison Orians, Professor of English and Director of Summer Sessions, Toledo (Ohio) University, and brother of Howard Orians, marked the end of the current Screen Tour season. Robert Hecht, member of the Board of Directors, introduced Dr. Orians and Harry Giessow, a vice-president of the Society, gave an impressive talk on the achievements since 1905 of the organization and the purpose of "Loyalty Night."

Awards in recognition of outstanding contributions to conservation education are made possible through the generosity, on Loyalty Nights, of our members and friends.

## OUTINGS

Two Audubon outings are being planned. Announcements of the dates and locations will be made later.

## A BIRD OF A BIOGRAPHY

by J. Earl Comfort

Because of the tremendous increase in the interest in birds with the resultant increase in numbers of enthusiastic bird watchers a treatise to aid the novice and expert, alike, in bird study is imperative. Because I'm best qualified for this important assignment my biography will prove of incalculable interest and assistance:

Birds are the things of a feather that flock together, the things fine feathers make fine, the things one stone kills two of, the things that sing in the spring, tra la and tweet, tweet and the things I'll be a dirty. Birds are the things on the wing, wings are the things on the bird. Birds are the things when the pie was opened began to sing, the things that are brained, the things of paradise, the love things and the things in a gilded cage.

Birds are the things of an eye view of, the friends that are feathered, the early things that get the worm, the eye things of maple, the thunder things, the things let's all sing like they sing, the nest soup things, and the things and the bees. Birds are the calls things, the book things, the bath things, the house things, the feeder things and the song things.

Birds are the things golfers try for, the things wrestlers get and punch drunks hear, the things some people eat like, the things that are watched and clocked and the things that's for them. Birds are the things photographers ask children to watch and the things one in the hand is worth two bushed ones. Birds prefer the bush there is no use beating around. The surest bush to get the bird in is Flatbush, sometimes called Brooklyn. A bird in the hand is unhandy.

Illegal is not a sick U. S. emblem of freedom. A swan dive is not a notorious gathering place for birds. There are no curtain calls to a swan song, just curtains. Dying swans do not rearrange their colors. A swan is the thing I'll.

All birds fly except some. Some of the some are Senator, ostriches, penguins, yard birds, jail birds and the St. Louis

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Cardinals. Jail birds do not migrate. Yard birds are not three-footed. Yard birds most enjoyed are the neighbor's chickens when they go to pot, your pot, cooking and abdominal. Jail birds and stool pigeons sing at Sing Sing. They deny association with bank robins. The Cardinals are high flyers until other baseball teams clip their wings.

Just as there are two sides to all issues there are two sides to birds, the inside and the outside. Both sides are covered with feathers except the inside. They grow externally because there is more room on the outside. The pin feathers are not pinned on. The inside is darker than the outside unless it is a blackbird and the inside is filled with what it takes to get ahead. All birds got a head, which is on top, excluding that upside-down bird, the nuthatch, originator of "bottoms up." The nuthatch got that way trying to hatch nuts in a boobyhatch.

As our unpaid bills are always ahead of us, the bird's bill is always in front of it unless it is on a backward flying hummingbird. Hummingbirds do not hum their songs.

Bird migration is a feat. The feet end in claws. Those on hummingbirds are inconspicuous like the ones in fine print in an insurance policy. Desert birds have sandy claws the year around. The back of a bird is directly above the stomach with the exception of a dead bird, which is hard for a bird watcher to stomach.

Don't try to catch birds by sprinkling salt on their tails and take what the little birdie tells you with a grain of that salt because all birds carry tails. Some are tales of woe which should have been giddap in the open season. Some birds soar, others are in the hunting season. Crows have caws to complain.

Parrots are mocking birds, but mockingbirds are not parrots and mourning doves are blue birds though blue birds aren't mourning doves. Young catbirds aren't kitten birds nor are baby cowbirds calf birds. Some birds go for a lark, especially another lark. Others quail at the thought.

A goose, booby, old crow, turkey, cuckoo or loon doesn't always wear feathers and a clay pigeon, stool pigeon, live pigeon, dead pigeon, a lame duck, dead duck or sitting duck may never have had any. A lame duck is one that forgot to, wary ones duck soup. A quack isn't always traced to a duck. A dead duck and sitting duck are synonymous as are fowl and foul weather and duck bill and dead beat, but fowl and foul language aren't. Wood

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ducks are not decoys. Ducks are things it's good weather for, the goose the thing that hangs high and yours is cooked. Swifts are. Turkey is the thing in the straw and in Syria's hair. Crow's feet are unwelcome except to crows.

A dead bird, dead duck and dead pigeon are the same species. A clay pigeon is not what it's cracked up to be. Despite romance a slick chick, pigeon, wren, quail, turtle dove or chickadee may not be a female. A right tern is a good tern. Terns are the things you take for the worse. In England a howl owls, in America an owl howls. A butcher bird is not used at a poultry farm, and a rain crow is not a wet rooster greeting.

A wild canary is one that's been cussed out by the parrot. Bird watchers make wild fowl wild, grouse grouse, and crossbills cross. A golden-crowned sparrow is not a king bird. The dodo bird became extinct when it ran out of dough. Birds of prey aren't religious. Bird dogs, turtle doves, fish hawks, cowbirds and catbirds are not hybrids nor are pigeon-toed creatures a cross between pigeons and toads.

A game bird is one that tries to cross our busy highways. America has no lyre birds besides boasting kingfishers. Some birds raise larger than normal broods because they have been egged on by cowbirds. Cowbird nests are invisible. Bird songs are not inspired by bird bands. Gulls are not gullible, but YOU are if you swallow this corn.

As the baby bird said when it backed out of its warm nest. My tale is told.

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## AUDUBON SOCIETY ON T-V AND RADIO

"Adventures in Nature" continues on KETC (Channel 9), Thursdays, 8:30 to 8:45 p.m. Remember to tune in—our panel, with Rex Conyers as host, is doing a really wonderful job. The same panel may be heard on Tuesdays, 9:15 to 9:30 a.m. on KFUE Radio Station. Keep sending in questions—thanks! Although similar in title, the programs are individually very different.

Before leaving with Francie on a vacation in Mexico, Martin Schweig, on both our radio and T-V Audubon programs, appeared in an interview with Julie Hershey of the St. Louis Public Library on their "Favorite Reading" program over KETC.

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by J. Earl Comfort

In the St. Louis Area the first three months of 1958 averaged considerably below normal in temperature, with February and March showing the greatest digression, with March so far below the norm that vegetation was so retarded insects were not available for expectant Spring migrant birds. As a result, most year lists as well as daily field trip lists, were far below par in our region. Especially detrimental to our wintering birds were the deep snows of February and March, working a decided hardship on seed-eating species. Total precipitation in the form of rain and snow was above normal for the three-month period covered by this report. In summary, the consensus of the opinion of the active birders was decidedly unfavorable, mainly because of the many bitterly cold weekends, with the resultant poor lists.

Rarest birds of the year to date was the Boat-tailed Grackle in January. Some other exciting listings of the year have been: Greater Scaup Duck, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Krider's, Western Red-tailed, Harlan's and Rough-legged Hawks, Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk), Glaucous Gull; Barn, and Long-eared and Short-eared, Owls, Red-Shafted Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskins in enormous flocks, Redpoll, Spotted Towhee and Smith's Longspur.

The Barn Owl was again spotted by Sally Springer in Edwardsville, Ill., where it nests each Spring, usually our only Barn Owl listing of the year. In Warson Woods in St. Louis County, a pair of Horned Owls also become easy listing each season through their regular nesting.

St. Louis Audubon field trips of the year have been especially enjoyed at Shaw's Garden Arboretum and in the Busch Wildlife Area at Weldon Springs.

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## COME OUT FOR BIRD WALKS IN FOREST PARK AND SHAW'S GARDEN

Dates for the Forest Park Sunday morning Bird Walks this year are: April 20th and 27th, May 4th (also the date of Spring Bird Round-up) and May 11th. Martin Schweig, Jr., will again act as chairman of the Forest Park Bird Walks.

Bird Walks in Shaw's garden will be held this year on Saturday, May 3rd and Saturday, May 17th, starting from the Main Gate of the Garden at 8:00 a.m. Leaders of these two nature walks will be Diane and Eugene Wilhelm, 5347 Delmar Boulevard. Gene is now a Ranger Park Naturalist out west during summer vacations and is a member of the panel on our radio and T-V series, "Adventures in Nature."

On Sunday, May 11th, there will be the monthly census of birds in the August A. Busch Wildlife Area at Weldon Springs.

## MIGRANT BIRDS ARE WEATHERWISE

One of the marvels of the northward migration in spring is the almost uncanny way in which geese and other water fowl find open water almost as soon as the ice has left its surface. Yet they seldom make the mistake of advancing into regions where water is still ice covered. How do they manage to tread this meteorological tightrope?

Similarly, it is evident each year that many small migrant birds appear just as soon as the advance of spring has made the land habitable for them . . . These early spring travelers have been called "weather migrants" because their arrival in the north is so closely related to the vagaries of spring weather. By contrast, migrants arriving later in the spring have been termed "calendar migrants" because of the regularity with which they reach a neighborhood about the same date each year. Yet the variation in arrival time, so conspicuous in early migrants, also exists for these later calendar migrants. The difference in arrival dates from year to year is frequently as much as four or five days, and may be as great as ten days or more in unusual seasons. When birds do arrive in these regions, they characteristically occur in **waves** . . . so that on some spring days small birds are to be found in every bush and tree, while on other days, very few are to be seen.

Naturally, some attempts were made to correlate the occurrence of these bird waves, or lack of them, with changes in weather, but it was not until recently that some progress was made, primarily by the advances in the science of meteorology in the past 15 years. Other contributing factors were the greater availability of synoptic daily weather maps, the increasing number of bird watchers, some of whom had received meteorological training.

It was through the application of such relatively recent concepts as frontal systems and movement of individual air masses that the pattern of migrational movement in spring gradually took on recognizable and predictable form. In 1947 one of the authors found that a certain type of barometric pressure pattern coincided with the arrival of spring bird waves in New England. The following year a number of interested persons co-operated in a joint study during spring migration, half a dozen regions, from Wisconsin to New England, being checked daily for migrant arrivals. This information was then compared with the synoptic daily weather maps. Strong evidence resulted of the existence of a definite relationship between migratory flights and the prevailing pressure pattern. This relationship was then set forth in an experimental hypothesis which has since been corroborated by the evidence of subsequent years, which is briefly:

In the central and eastern portions of the United States and adjacent parts of southern Canada, pronounced spring migration occurs on occasions when such regions lie within the western portion of a high pressure area, or, more particularly, within the warm sector of a low pressure area which develops in the vicinity of Colorado and intensifies as it moves northeastward through the Great Lakes region. It is evident that pronounced northward movement of birds takes place in light



to strong southerly winds and relatively mild temperatures. Birds are thus "flying the pressure pattern" and moving northward when wind direction and temperature are favorable. Conversely, while **some** migration takes place virtually every spring day or night, it is at a minimum in a particular region while that region lies within the western side of a low pressure area or the eastern side of a high pressure area. The stormy area north of a low pressure center also seems to be avoided.

During the spring migration period of 1950, for example, while there were numerous relatively minor fluctuations in bird numbers agreeing well with day-to-day weather changes, two major waves were experienced across the eastern part of the continent, on March 27-29 and May 4-7. The correlation was summarized in the August **Audubon Field Notes**: "A storm of great intensity, which developed over the central Great Plains on March 26, moved northeastward across the Great Lakes, bringing a brief spell of spring weather to the eastern half of the United States. The entire Northeast was deluged with a veritable flood of migrants drawn northward by the strong southerly winds that covered an area extending as much as 1,400 miles eastward from the storm's center . . . A similar storm, with winds of gale force up to 90 miles an hour, developed over the northern Great Plains on May 5 and moved northeastward into Canada. The thousands of midwestern and eastern observers afield on the weekend of May 6-7 witnessed the mass arrival of hordes of delayed April migrants, together with the first wave of May birds. Almost overnight the migration caught up the 10 to 14 days by which it had been retarded in many sections."

. . . Active spring migration normally is halted with the arrival of a cold front, but in this case the front was weak and migration continued under the favorable conditions existing behind it. While the example described is an extreme one, it is typical of the general situation favoring large-scale northward spring migration. Weatherwise bird enthusiasts are tremendously helped by detailed weather information, which tells them where and when to look for significant migratory surges, on some occasions at least 40 hours in advance of arrival.

All of which means that the birds are weatherwise—more ornithologists should be so—and we ornithologists are deeply grateful to the meteorologists!

\* \* \* \* \*

(Condensed from the article by William W. H. Gunn and Aaron M. Bagg in *Weatherwise*, April, 1951 - pp. 34-35.)

Professor Gunn is a member of the zoology department, University of Toronto, Canada, and Mr. Bagg is an amateur ornithologist of Holyoke, Mass.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

Our continuously amazing President, Earl Hath, who somehow manages to create a 48-hour working day for himself, judging by the time from his business duties that he devotes to the Audubon Society, started an even earlier working day on Wednesday, April 9. At 6:30 a.m., he was on the air for 20 minutes in an excellent interview with Ted Mangner, popular KMOX farm-and-home hour personality. We hope many of our readers may have tuned in their radios that morning as Earl did a really top job of telling the public of the significant conservation, educational and recreational work achieved over the years by our Society. Mr. Mangner and Earl also brightly dramatized the fun and rewards of bird-watching, especially during migration seasons.

Important Invitation! Sally J. Orchard, Assistant Curator of the Missouri Historical Society (and enthusiastic bird-watcher) extends a special invitation to Audubon Society members to visit a recently acquired collection of letters written by John James Audubon, members of his family and friends. This exhibit, housed in the Documents Case, East Wing, First Floor of the Jefferson Memorial, contains such fascinating letters as one to his wife, Lucy Bakewell Audubon, which was penned from a schooner laying off the coast of Labrador in the year 1833, and another to Thomas M. Brewer, Jr., of Boston, written from Charleston, S. C., in 1836, mentioning his painting of the Black Rail which he had "sent to England to be engraved." Of great interest is Audubon's original manuscript for his Biography of the Great White Heron.

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